

2020 US-PH EXCHANGE ALUMNI REPORT



**RESILIENCE
& INNOVATION**

Contents



This report is published by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines. For more information about this report and about U.S. exchange alumni engagement activities, please email AlumniPhilippines@state.gov or visit <https://ph.usembassy.gov>.

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Background

Since 1948, more than 9,000 Filipinos and Americans have participated in U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs between the Philippines and the United States. These participants include youth, mid-career professionals, and senior officials who represent all sectors from both countries. The connections forged between Filipinos and Americans through these exchange programs have helped build mutual understanding and strengthened a robust bilateral relationship. Exchange program alumni have contributed to the development of the Philippines upon their return and continued to connect and work with alumni from around the globe.

A unique attribute of U.S. exchange programs in the Philippines is the dynamism of the Filipino exchange alumni who have organized themselves into more than 30 associations. Through these alumni associations, they actively leverage their exchange experiences to develop programs and projects to address some of the nation's most pressing needs.

In 2020, the alumni community demonstrated resilience, innovation, and collaboration as the Philippines grappled with unprecedented natural disasters and a public health crisis. The alumni responded to the Taal volcano eruption in January, the COVID-19 pandemic that placed the Philippines under quarantine beginning in March 2020, and typhoons that ravaged several provinces from October through December. Beyond rapid responses to disasters, alumni also launched initiatives to improve maritime security and resource management, increase transparency and accountability in government, enhance access to and quality of education, and promote civic engagement-- shared goals of both nations. Due to COVID-19 pandemic protocols, the alumni implemented most of their initiatives online. This report highlights the 2020 initiatives undertaken by the following alumni associations:

PROGRAM-BASED ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

- ACCESS Philippine Youth Leadership Program Alumni Association, Inc. (ACCESS-PYLP)
- East-West Center Alumni Association-Philippines (EWC)
- Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA) Alumni Association
- Fulbright Scholars Alumni Association
- Fulbright Philippine Agriculture Alumni Association (FPAAA)
- Global Ugrad Scholars of the Philippines Alumni Association (GUSPAA)
- Hubert H. Humphrey Alumni Association Philippines
- International Leaders for Education Program/Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching Program (ILEP-FDAI) Philippines Alumni Association
- International Visitor Leadership Program Philippines, Inc. (IVLP)
- Southeast Asian Youth Leadership Program (SEAYLP) Philippines
- The Eisenhower Fellowship Association of the Philippines (EFAP)
- Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Alumni Philippines

AREA-BASED ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

- U.S. Government Alumni Associations (USGAA) in:

1. Basilan
2. Bicol
3. Bukidnon (Hunglus)
4. Cagayan de Oro (Bugkos)
5. Cebu
6. Davao
7. Eastern Visayas
8. Iligan
9. Marawi
10. Maguindanao and Cotabato
11. Negros Occidental
12. North Cotabato
13. Panay and Guimaras
14. South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos (SOCCSKSARGEN)
15. Zamboanga del Sur
16. Zamboanga City



2020 Alumni Activities

BY THE NUMBERS



158 activities conducted

The **28 Alumni Associations** conducted 158 activities in 2020 focused on responding to disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, advancing maritime security and resource management, increasing transparency and accountability in government, enhancing access to and quality of education, and promoting civic engagement.



879 exchange alumni engaged

Alumni-led activities engaged 879 exchange alumni.



3,866 people reached

Alumni-led activities engaged 3,866 people and reached thousands more through social media live streams.



Looking Back to 2020

Responding to Crises and Disasters

The U.S. exchange alumni community in the Philippines has an impressive track record in leading effective emergency response programs. During the 2017 Marawi siege, alumni provided nearly \$42,500 worth of donations to approximately 20,000 displaced people. In December 2019, alumni sent relief to communities affected by severe earthquakes across Mindanao. In 2020, they assisted frontliners and communities impacted by natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. The alumni community's success in 2020 demonstrates their ability to find innovative ways to achieve their goals and leverage personal and professional connections to assist local communities.



Halinabangay Project

In response to Typhoon Ulysses that ravaged Luzon island in November 2020, the USGAA in Zamboanga del Sur raised Php272,000 worth of donations through an online campaign to provide relief items for typhoon-hit communities of Cagayan, Isabela, Camarines Sur, and Bicol. Despite lockdowns during the pandemic, the association gathered and delivered relief items through partnerships with local governments, student organizations, civil society organizations, and businesses in Zamboanga del Sur and the recipient provinces.

◀ Halinabangay Project volunteers load relief items into trucks bound for typhoon-affected communities.

UGRAD U Help Project

In March 2020, the GUSPAA launched the "UGRAD U Help" Project that raised Php201,000 and provided meals for 300 low-income households in Rizal province and indigenous communities in South Cotabato whose livelihoods were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The association continued its fundraising efforts in November 2020 when Typhoon Ulysses ravaged Luzon. It provided relief packs for 130 families in Piat and Alcala, Cagayan Province.

Ugrad alumnus Anthony Baliuag distributes relief items to typhoon-hit communities in Cagayan province. ▶



Update: Donation Drive for Ulysses-affected Communities in Cagayan



Project Bayanihan

The USGAA in Davao, Maguindanao, and Cotabato launched the "Project Bayanihan" donation drive from April to December and raised more than Php275,000 to provide relief packs to families in Luzon and Davao. The families were displaced by the typhoons and lost their livelihoods due to pandemic lockdowns. Exchange alumni partnered with the Philippine Air Force to transport the donations to communities amidst the ongoing lockdowns.

◀ USGAA Davao City representatives turn over relief packs to the Philippine Air Force for delivery to typhoon-hit communities.

Responding to Crises and Disasters

Mine, Tabang! Project

USGAA Zamboanga City conducted an online rummage sale and donation drive in November to raise funds for families in Zamboanga City displaced by Typhoon Ulysses. The donation drive provided food and hygiene supplies to 10 families in Zamboanga City.

Humphrey Voices Series on Bayanihan to Heal as One Act

On April 17, Humphrey alumni discussed the priorities, risks, and benefits of the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act” during the 42nd Humphrey Voices Series forum. Forty Humphrey alumni and more than 2,500 viewers on Facebook Livestream joined the event. The Bayanihan to Heal as One Act was a newly-enacted law that granted the Philippine government special powers to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Speakers included Humphrey alumni and officials from the Philippines Senate, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Health.

AdaptPH Project

In August 2020, YSEALI alumni launched AdaptPH, a nationwide campaign encouraging Filipinos to observe public protocols that help prevent the spread of COVID-19. AdaptPH’s website (www.adapt.ph) offers free downloadable information kits for local governments, public transportation operators, public markets, and small businesses to implement proper social distancing, sanitation, and hygiene practices. The campaign also provides resources on effective strategies for maximizing online learning for school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The campaign is a partnership between YSEALI alumni, Limitless Lab, Tagani Philippines, and the “Disiplina Muna” Campaign of the Philippine Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

AdaptPH Project produced information materials that local governments, public transportation operators, public markets, and small businesses use to enforce public health safety protocols.



Organizers of Mine, Tabang! Project turn over food and hygiene supplies to families affected by Typhoon Ulysses.

USWAG Pinas Project

On October 24 and 25, PYLP alumni facilitated a workshop for 200 Mindanao youth leaders on responding to community issues in the “new normal.” During the workshop, youth leaders identified community issues they encountered during the pandemic and designed possible solutions. The youth leaders then pitched their projects and received seed funding for implementation. The projects respond to economic, environmental, and health issues that the youth leaders have encountered in their communities.



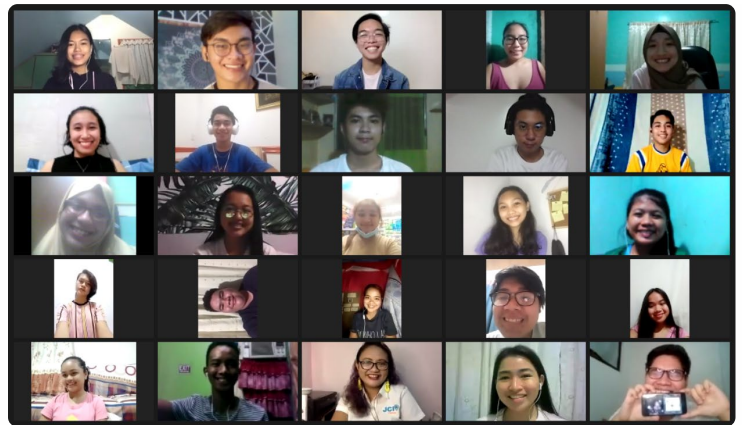
Advancing Shared Goals of the Philippines and the United States

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, the exchange alumni found innovative ways to address issues and advance goals of mutual interest to the Philippines and the United States. These goals include promoting transparency and accountability in government, enhancing access to and quality of education, strengthening maritime security and law enforcement, and upholding human rights and the rule of law.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Project KATUNGOD (Kabatan-onan TUBag sa Nagkahiusang Gahom sa Oras Demokrasya/ Youth the Answer to the Collective Force in Democratic Times)

As voter registration for the 2022 Philippine national election started in October 2020, the USGAA in Zamboanga del Sur conducted an online awareness campaign and webinar to encourage the youth to register and vote. The initiative provided information on registering and voting in 2022 in partnership with the Legal Network for Truthful Elections in the Philippines (LENTE), an association of lawyers who work on election-related issues.



▲ Project Katungod participants pose for a group photo during their webinar.

Youth Training for SK Councils

On January 11, 2020, the USGAA in Zamboanga City trained 13 Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Council) officials from four barangays in Zamboanga to draft Comprehensive Barangay Youth Development Plans (CBYP) and Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plans (ABYIP). Participants then formulated their youth development plans for their respective communities, which were implemented during the year.

Project Synergeia

From October to November 2020, the USGAA in Zamboanga City trained 50 youth on leadership, environmental preservation, and peacebuilding through Project Synergeia. The project included a three-week online course on project design. After the training, the youth leaders implemented their project plans in their communities with mentorship and funding support from exchange alumni. USGAA Zamboanga also launched mini-competitions on vlogging, infographic layout, and video-making for the participants to build online awareness of the project's impact.



▲ Exchange alumni in Zamboanga City conduct a training program for Sangguniang Kabataan officials of their city on January 11, 2020.

Advancing Shared Goals of the Philippines and the United States

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Zamboanga City Civic Engagement Program

The USGAA in Zamboanga City conducted an online forum with 64 youth, civil society, and private sector leaders in Zamboanga City about issues faced during the pandemic and how the city government operated during the pandemic. The forum provided information and became a venue for consultation on the Department of Education's distance learning approaches, city government services, pandemic recovery, and youth development plans.

YSEALI Bayanivation

YSEALI alumni launched the Bayanivation Project on February 20, 2020 in Pasig City and Sipalay, Negros Oriental, to promote innovation and broad-based participation in local governance. The project convened youth leaders and government officials to collaborate on creating innovative solutions to local governments' challenges. Innovations introduced include mobile applications to gather citizen insights and improve government systems and processes.

SKYounified 2.0

USGAA - Negros Occidental and the Philippine National Movement for Young Legislators (NMYL) launched the #SKYOUNified 2.0 Project, a four-month series of workshops that developed the leadership capacity and policymaking acumen of Sangguniang Kabataan (Youth Councils) in the Philippines. More than 100 Sangguniang Kabataan officials nationwide participated in the training program, which included discussions on solving priority youth issues such as environmental degradation and drug abuse, unemployment, and lack of livelihood. YSEALI alumni who have been elected to local government office mentored the participants, who are high-level SK officials from major cities such as Quezon City, Davao City, Zamboanga City, and Cebu City.

ENHANCING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION



▲ High school students join in a group activity during the Project SCICON information session on February 22, 2020.

Project SCICON: Molding Young Scientists

The USGAA in Zamboanga del Sur conducted the one-day Project SCICON information session on February 22, 2020 in Pagadian City. The session provided 40 high school students information on careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The initiative encourages students to pursue STEM careers as the number of professionals in these fields declined in Pagadian City.



Alay Turo Kay Future Isko Project

On August 10-24, the USGAA in Zamboanga del Sur conducted online and in-person tutorial sessions for 30 underprivileged students from Pagadian City and Zamboanga del Sur for their college entrance examination. Exchange alumni helped prepare the students on language proficiency, reading comprehension, oral communication, sciences, mathematics, and abstract reasoning.

Participants of Alay Turo kay Future Isko Project take diagnostic exams to measure their preparedness for college entrance exams. ►



Advancing Shared Goals of the Philippines and the United States



A YSEALI alumnus leads a tutorial session for parents at one of the Neighborhood Learning Shelters.

ENHANCING ACCESS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

We Work for Teacher Leaders

On November 26 and 27, the ILEP-FDAI alumni trained online 250 teachers online on effective teaching and learning strategies for virtual classes. Among the topics discussed were socio-emotional learning, teacher care, and technology leadership skills.

Partnership with Higher Education and Agriculture: Developing a Culture of Excellence in Research, Teaching, and Extension

From October to November, the FPAAA conducted a webinar series on the study and practice of agricultural education in the Philippines. More than 300 agriculture faculty members and students participated. During the webinars, Department of Agriculture Secretary William Dar and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairman and Fulbright alumnus Prospero De Vera led sessions on the Department of Agriculture's emerging priorities in the "new normal" and the role of CHED in Agri-education.

Project Dilaab: Leading the Light For The Better Normal

In August, the USGAA in Davao City launched Project Dilaab, an online campaign that encouraged youth in Davao City to lead initiatives to improve access and quality of education, promote social entrepreneurship, and protect the environment. The campaign included webinars, workshops, online quiz shows, and social media posts that engaged youth in Davao City.

Neighborhood Learning Shelter Project

In December, USGAA Zamboanga City established Neighborhood Learning Shelters in remote communities to support parents and students on self-paced remote learning. Neighborhood Learning Shelters are designated huts or buildings in remote areas offered for use by the local government to the exchange alumni to conduct tutorial sessions for students and seminars for parents on how to help their children with remote learning modalities. More than 30 parents have participated in these tutorial sessions.

Co-Presented by:



In partnership with



PROJECT DILAAB SERIES

LEADING THE LIGHT FOR THE BETTER NORMAL

August, October, & December 2020

Advancing Shared Goals of the Philippines and the United States

ENHANCING ACCESS AND QUALITY EDUCATION

48th Humphrey Voices Forum on Promoting Self-care and Balance for Educators Amid the Pandemic

On September 24, Humphrey alumni and Fulbright-DAI alumni led a virtual discussion on promoting self-care and balance for educators amid the pandemic in partnership with Unilever Philippines and the Institute for Autonomy and Governance. The discussion provided tips and techniques for coping with stress and practicing self-care in the new normal. Educators from across the country participated in the webinar.

Iwas Fake E-Learning Resources

On Global Media and Information Literacy Day (October 24), exchange alumni-led organization Out of the Box (OOTB) launched the “Iwas Fake” E-Learning website. The website contains online courses and modules, interactive and downloadable resource materials, and instructional videos designed for parents and teachers to teach positive online behavior and media and information literacy. More information on Iwas Fake E-Learning Resources is available at www.ootbmedialiteracy.org/iwasfake.

Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis Webinar

October 15 and 16, USGAA in Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan City, and Bukidnon launched a two-day online workshop about “Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis.” This webinar introduced concepts and strategies on educational leadership in times of crisis to more than 500 public school teachers and administrators in Northern Mindanao. This online workshop was a partnership between the USGAAs and the Department of Education Division of El Salvador City.

International MIL Youth Virtual Summit

The USGAA in SOCKSARGEN hosted a virtual International Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Summit in November that gathered 100 youth MIL advocates from six countries and MIL experts for discussions on how to consume information from social media responsibly. The alumni partnered with the Philippine Association of Media and Information Literacy (PAMIL) and the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL) Asia Pacific Chapter.

▼ Participants of the International MIL Youth Virtual Summit pose for a group photo.



Advancing Shared Goals of the Philippines and the United States

MARITIME SECURITY

YSEALI World Maritime Day Forums

On September 24, YSEALI alumni in Iloilo, Guimaras, and Panay hosted a webinar on “Sustainable and Peaceful Co-management of ASEAN Waters,” encouraging youth collaboration to promote marine conservation and maritime issues. Speakers included YSEALI alumni from the Indonesian Ministry of Marine and Fisheries Affairs, Reef Check Malaysia, and the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute. On the same day, YSEALI alumni in Davao City hosted another webinar on connecting ships, ports, the environment, and people in the digital age. Speakers from the shipping industry and youth advocates of marine conservation discussed the shipping industry’s role in sustainable maritime development. More than 500 students from maritime institutes and seafarers participated in the discussion.

Virtual Discussion on the West Philippine Sea

On December 14, YSEALI alumni from Central Visayas held a virtual discussion on youth’s role in marine conservation in the West Philippine Sea. The discussion focused on the West Philippine Sea’s impact on commerce, marine ecosystems, and food security in the Philippines. Fulbright alumni who are maritime law enforcement and marine ecosystem conservation experts from the University of the Philippines and the Department of Foreign Affairs served as resource speakers. More than 100 students participated in Zoom, and 3,200 people watched the forum on Facebook Live.



▲ Professor Jay Batongbacal from the University of the Philippines and Director Roderico Atienza from the Department of Foreign Affairs shared their thoughts on the West Philippine Sea situation during the Virtual Discussion on the West Philippine Sea on December 14, 2020.

HUMAN RIGHTS/RULE OF LAW

Bots Legis Retrenchment 101 and Makatao Webinar Series

From August to November, YSEALI alumni in Cagayan de Oro and Bots Legis held a webinar series on legal remedies to human rights and labor issues that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinars promoted awareness on the problems and rights of workers retrenched due to economic recession and issues on human rights during the pandemic. Prominent legal experts on human rights issues and labor law served as resource speakers. The webinars reached more than 11,000 Facebook users. Bots Legis is an organization of young lawyers and law students that runs a Free Legal Aid Chatbot on Facebook, which provides information on common legal concerns.



▲ Exchange alumni and legal experts lead discussions on human rights and labor issues during the COVID-19 pandemic during the Bots Legis Retrenchment 101 and Makatao Webinar Series.

Project Urduja: Empowering Emerging Filipina Leaders

On December 8, YES and YSEALI alumni launched “Project Urduja: Empowering Emerging Filipina Leaders,” a year-long program training emerging female leaders on leadership, gender equality, and social justice. More than 30 female leaders participated in online webinars and implemented small grant projects. Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo delivered a message of support at the Project Urduja during its launch, noting the program’s timeliness in responding to the exacerbated gender gaps caused by the pandemic.

Nurturing the Alumni Community

During the pandemic lockdowns, people became isolated from friends and family, leading to an increased demand for mental health services¹ and the need to find new ways to maintain a sense of community. The Exchange Alumni responded by launching activities promoting mental health wellness and innovating ways to stay connected and keep a sense of community among exchange alumni.

MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS

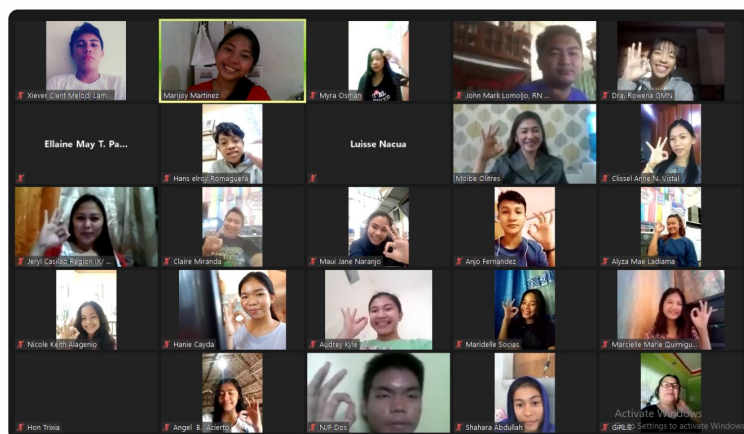
QuaranTEENSph: Young People's Mental health in the Digital Age >>>

Throughout the months of September and October, the USGAA in Iligan City and PYLP alumni raised awareness on mental health issues and the importance of emotional, psychological, and social well-being through webinars. Seventy youth from Mindanao participated in the webinar series through Zoom, while a broader audience viewed the webinar series on Facebook live stream.



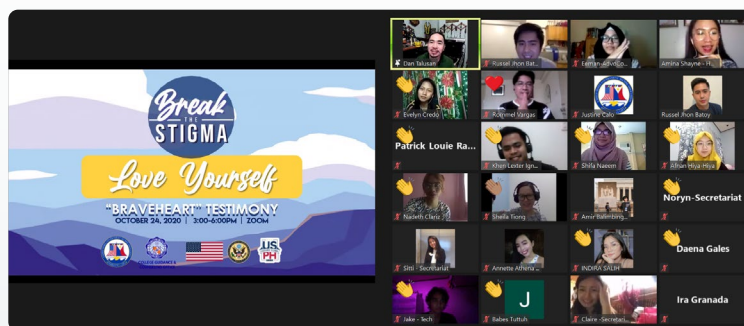
It's Okay to Not to Be Okay Project >>>

On September 26 and 27, PYLP Alumni conducted a two-day webinar for 30 students in Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur on nurturing their mental health during the pandemic. The exchange alumni engaged psychiatrists to provide information to students on stress management techniques and mental health wellness activities like journaling and mood tracking.



Break the Stigma >>>

From October 10 to 24, the USGAA in Zamboanga City trained 20 college students on mental health wellness through a series of webinars. The exchange alumni partnered with mental health experts and advocates from Ateneo de Zamboanga University, Peer Organization of the Philippines, and Far Eastern University Peer Counselors to provide content to the participating college students. The webinars were also live-streamed on Facebook to reach a wider audience.



¹ CNN Philippines. (2020, August 26). DOH reports spikes in mental health-related calls due to COVID-19 crisis. Retrieved from CNN Philippines: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/8/26/Mental-health-anxiety-suicide-hotline-Philippines-COVID-19.html>
Tomacruz, S. (2020, June 8). NCMH records spike in mental health consults during coronavirus lockdown. Retrieved from Rappler: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/national-center-mental-health-records-spike-hotline-calls-during-coronavirus-lockdown>

Nurturing the Alumni Community



- ▶ U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires John Law, U.S. Department of State Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Education and Cultural Affairs Matthew Lussenhop, and Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. deliver remarks during the online launch of the IVLP 80th Anniversary Week Celebration.



STRENGTHENING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AMONG USG EXCHANGE ALUMNI IN THE PHILIPPINES

IVLP 80th Anniversary Celebration

In 2020, the IVLP celebrated its 80th anniversary by highlighting its alumni's impact and contribution to Philippine society through social media campaigns and online events. The year-long #FacesofExchange social media campaign featured stories of Filipino IVLP alumni's impact on their communities and professions. IVLP alumni also led webinars throughout the year. They shared their expertise on subjects relevant to the Philippines' current events, such as cybersecurity, media and information literacy, and preparing for disasters. The year-long celebration culminated with IVLP Week from December 7 to 11. IVLP alumni led a series of online discussions throughout the week on topics where they made significant contributions in recent years, namely women's empowerment, community volunteerism, peace education, and juvenile justice reform. IVLP alumnus and Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr., U.S. Embassy in the Philippines Chargé d'Affaires John Law, and U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Lussenhop opened IVLP Week.

Mural Painting at the American Corner of Ateneo de Zamboanga University

In February, the USGAA in Zamboanga City partnered with the American Corner in Ateneo de Zamboanga University and Ateneo Center for Culture and the Arts to design and paint a mural at the American Corner of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University's library. Exchange alumni volunteered for the mural project, which served as a teambuilding activity

Exchange alumni in Zamboanga City pose for a photo during their mural painting activity in February 2020 at Ateneo de Zamboanga University. ▶



Nurturing the Alumni Community

STRENGTHENING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AMONG USG EXCHANGE ALUMNI IN THE PHILIPPINES

Exchange Alumni Experience Campaign

Throughout July, in celebration of Filipino-American friendship month, the USGAA in Zamboanga City launched a social media campaign that featured alumni's stories about participating in exchange programs and the impact on their work and advocacy. The campaign featured 30 Filipino USG Exchange alumni from Zamboanga City, Basilan, and Cagayan de Oro. It also documented an American Exchange alumnus' experience in the Philippines and how it impacted his life and career.

Kurukabildo

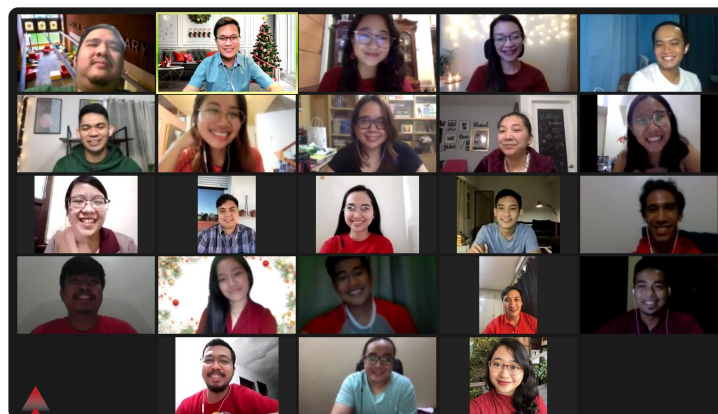
The PYLP alumni conducted Kurukabildo sessions twice a month from August to December. These sessions were a mix of knowledge-sharing webinars on PYLP alumni advocacies and fun teambuilding activities. Kurukabildo knowledge-sharing webinars focused on youth activism during the pandemic, life balance and mindfulness, digital literacy, practicing grit and hope, and storytelling. The fun teambuilding activities included spoken word poetry, workshops on backyard gardening, jingle-writing, and video challenges. Seventy-five PYLP alumni and more than 150 people from academia, civil society, and the private sector participated in the sessions.

Regular E-numans

Throughout 2020, the USGAA in Zamboanga City conducted regular E-numan sessions, which are regular informal meetings for members of the association to update activities, share advocacies and career updates, and conduct team building activities like quiz shows and sharing sessions.

Youthnited: Zooming in Youth Advocacies

On December 26, the USGAA in Maguindanao and Cotabato promoted YSEALI programs during a webinar for 50 representatives of youth-led organizations in the Bangsamoro region of Mindanao. Alumni shared their exchange experience and its impact on their work and career during the webinar. The event was conducted in partnership with the American Corner in Notre Dame University and youth organizations Positive VIBES and Alliance of Magnanimous Youth Leaders, Inc.



Annual Kumustahan

On December 20, GUSPAA conducted its yearly Kumustahan session online this year. Global Ugrad alumni shared updates on the alumni association's activities during the past year and plans for 2021. The session also provided a venue for Global Ugrad alumni to catch up with one another and share updates on their careers, advocacies, and lives.





Looking Forward to 2021

On January 17 and 23, 2021, representatives of exchange alumni associations met virtually for the annual Alumni Meet. They shared best practices to advance advocacies, sustain camaraderie among members during the pandemic, and discussed planned activities for 2021. From February to July 2021, alumni initiatives will be held online to comply with current pandemic protocols prohibiting in-person gatherings. Only a few area-based alumni associations, such as Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, will conduct small in-person activities due to intermittent internet connection. These in-person activities will comply with national and local government COVID-19 protocols. The rest of the alumni associations may implement in-person activities from August to December if local conditions permit.

Below are some of the initiatives to look forward to in 2021.



Increasing collaboration among alumni associations to address needs in the Philippines

The alumni associations are planning to jointly launch three projects that advance the United States and the Philippines' bilateral goals to promote media and information literacy, increase accountability and transparency in government, and ensure food security. The alumni associations consider these themes to be their priorities for the year to respond to communities' current needs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the volume and speed of the spread of online disinformation has increased. In response to this issue, the ILEP, FLTA, Global Ugrad, PYLP, and USGAA in Panay and Guimaras will launch an awareness campaign and a training program to increase media and information literacy and develop digital citizenship among parents, student journalists, and teachers.

In recent months, food security issues arose in the Philippines, leading to increased food prices. The alumni associations of Fulbright Agriculture scholars, Humphrey Fellows, IVLP, Davao City, Panay, and Guimaras are collaborating to raise awareness on food security issues and build stakeholders' capacity to respond. The initiative will include an online campaign, workshops, conferences, and webinars for households, food businesses, local government officials, farmers, agriculturists, and agricultural studies students.

Another issue alumni associations found to be important is the lack of youth participation in local governance, particularly in the legally-mandated youth development councils in cities and municipalities. The alumni associations of Global Ugrad scholars, YES, Cagayan de Oro, Basilan, Ilocos, Maguindanao, Cotabato, Negros Occidental, Marawi, SOCKSARGEN, and Tawi-Tawi will address this need by launching a youth capacity and network building program for local government and Department of Education youth development officers, and youth organization leaders from different regions in the Philippines. The program will train and provide a platform for sharing best practices and policies among youth development officers on positive ways to engage youth in governance.



Enhancing the access and quality of education

COVID-19 has caused drastic changes to the Philippines' education system, including the migration to remote and online learning, bringing new challenges to educators and students. In response, the alumni community plans a set of projects to build capacity and provide materials to support teachers and students. The ILEP/DAI alumni are launching monthly webinars for educators to enhance their online teaching strategies. FLTA alumni are planning to provide high school and college educators training on effectively teaching English and literature in online modalities. To respond to the students' needs, the USGAA in Tawi-Tawi is launching a psycho-social support program to promote mental health wellness among college students in their area. The USGAA in Iligan is launching webinars, podcasts, and a social media campaign to promote media and information literacy among students in their region. In rural and remote communities largely unreached by new technologies, the USGAA in Panay and Guimaras will provide Portable Educational Technology Systems (PETS) to aid students in remote learning.



Promoting grassroots civic engagement

The exchange alumni associations plan to implement programs to increase grassroots awareness and community capacity to address local issues and encourage more people to engage in the 2022 national elections. In Zamboanga City, the local USGAA will host monthly online forums to gather different sectors to exchange views on their city's current issues. In Marawi City and Lanao del Sur, the USGAA will launch a youth leadership and volunteerism program to encourage youth to address community needs. In Bukidnon, Hunglus USGAA plans to launch webinars and a social media campaign in partnership with social media influencers to promote voter registration before the 2022 elections.



Advocating for environmental protection

This year, alumni associations plan to increase public conversation on environmental issues and seek durable solutions among youth, government, and civil society. The GUSPAA is launching a workshop and seminar for student leaders to learn more about the environmental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and brainstorm ideas to introduce to school communities to mitigate environmental issues. USGAA Bukidnon will also launch forums to gather environmental experts, youth, government representatives, civil society, and indigenous peoples to discuss practical ways to address deforestation in the Philippines.



Upholding women's rights and gender equality

The YES alumni-led Project Urduja, launched in 2020, will continue to build young women's capacity to conduct projects that address women's rights issues in the Philippines. Groups of young women leaders throughout the Philippines will participate in a series of workshops and mentoring sessions from experienced women leaders and women's rights advocates. They will also receive seed funding to start projects advocating for gender equality in their communities.



Promoting local culture and heritage through literature

Alumni associations in Mindanao are planning activities to promote local culture and heritage through literature among youth. The USGAA in Zamboanga del Sur will launch a workshop for students to write short stories, plays, and poetry in English and local languages. The USGAA in Bukidnon will also launch an online poetry reading program to provide an avenue for self-expression and increase awareness of the culture and heritage among students in Bukidnon.



2020 Alumni Excellence Award

During the Alumni Meet held on January 2021, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines presented the first Alumni Excellence Awards. The awards recognized five individuals and four alumni associations who positively impacted Philippine society through alumni initiatives in 2020. These individuals and groups led outstanding initiatives that strengthened collaboration and cohesion among the exchange alumni community, addressed national and local issues innovatively and collaboratively, and strengthened people-to-people and institutional ties between the United States and the Philippines.

Alumni Excellence Award (Group)

Hubert H. Humphrey Alumni Philippines

The Humphrey Alumni increased awareness on relevant issues during the pandemic and responded to the needs of communities ravaged by typhoons. They led 14 online activities on topics ranging from personal wellness to national health policies. When typhoons ravaged Luzon provinces, the Humphrey alumni organized donation drives that provided relief to 400 affected families and more frontliners. They also supported other alumni associations' initiatives by mentoring, serving as resource speakers, and contributing resources.

ILEP-FDAI Philippine Alumni Association

The ILEP-FDAI Philippine Alumni Association developed many Filipino educators' capacity to teach in the new normal. They conducted 27 webinars, each engaging 150 educators, on how to teach online effectively. They also held regular online gatherings that allow ILEP-FDAI alumni to catch up with each other and maintain a sense of community. They partnered with the Department of Education and academic institutions in their work.

U.S. Government Alumni Association - Davao

The USGAA in Davao City responded to the needs of communities in their City that were affected by the pandemic, promoted mental health wellness, and supported local small businesses. They mobilized 300 youth in Davao City to collect and distribute Php1,000,000 worth of relief packs to typhoon victims in Luzon in November 2020. They also conducted online activities to raise awareness on mental health issues and promote local entrepreneurs' products. In all of these initiatives, the association collaborated with other exchange alumni associations and 28 other organizations in Mindanao.

U.S. Government Alumni Association - Zamboanga City

The USGAA in Zamboanga City expanded and reactivated the alumni community in their region, built partnerships with local institutions, and advanced their advocacy on promoting mental health wellness, improving education quality, and empowering youth. The initiatives include capacity-building of Sangguniang Kabataan officials in their City, online sessions for parents and students on mental health wellness, and establishing neighborhood learning centers in remote areas to support 32 parents and students in their remote learning. The initiatives were all conducted in partnership with the Zamboanga City Government.

Alumni Excellence Award (Individual)

Atty. Arnel Jose Bañas, Hubert H. Humphrey Alumnus

Atty. Arnel Jose Bañas established a dynamic sense of community among Humphrey alumni and facilitated collaboration among the Humphrey Alumni Association, other USG exchange alumni in the Philippines and abroad, and key institutions in the Philippines. He led initiatives such as the Humphrey Voices Series and the Humphrey Turon Special, which strengthened camaraderie among Humphrey Fellows, established partnerships with reputable institutions in the Philippines, and helped raise awareness on issues of interest to Philippine society. Atty. Arnel has also been a mentor to many other alumni association leaders on community-building and effective organizational development.

Harold Banggay, YSEALI Alumnus

Throughout 2020, Harold Banggay engaged alumni across the Philippines in multiple virtual programs that advanced environmental conservation advocacies, youth leadership, and maritime law enforcement in the West Philippine Sea. He also played an essential role in the success of the first YSEALI Philippines YOUNified Awards, which recognized outstanding youth organizations nationwide.

Joie Cruz, YSEALI alumna

Joie Cruz led initiatives promoting transparency and accountability in government. She launched the Bayanivation Project in Pasig City and Sipalay City, Negros Occidental, to build Sangguniang Kabataan officials' governance capacity. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Joie led AdaptPH Project, a nationwide campaign encouraging Filipinos to observe public protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19. She also is one of the key organizers of the Puhon Online fundraising Concert with Filipino folk-pop band Ben&Ben. The concert raised more than Php 4.2 million pesos. It provided personal protective equipment to frontline workers, food packs to families who lost livelihoods, and testing kits for cities with high numbers of COVID-19 cases.

Patricia Nicole Lucena, YSEALI Alumna

Patricia Nicole Lucena mobilized the exchange alumni in Davao City to respond to the needs of communities ravaged by Typhoons Ulysses and Vicky. She coordinated a collective response to the typhoons' aftermath in 12 of the 14 municipalities in Agusan del Sur. The response included establishing repacking stations and organizing volunteers to collect and deliver relief items to the affected communities.

Jerlie Luis- Requerme, IVLP Alumna

Judge Jerlie Luis-Requerme mobilized alumni in Northern Mindanao for advocacy projects, provided mentorship for other alumni associations on community resource mobilization and project management, and forged partnerships among alumni associations and other institutions in Mindanao. Notably, in 2020, Judge Jerlie initiated a collaboration between Bugkos – USGAA Cagayan de Oro and the Department of Education, which trained more than 1,000 educators in Northern Mindanao on effective leadership during the pandemic.

For more information about the U.S. Exchange Alumni activities, you may email AlumniPhilippines@state.gov.
Each alumni association's contact details are also shown on this report's directory section
for inquiries on specific activities.

2020 Alumni Excellence Award
presented to
Arnel Jose S. Banas

2020 Alumni Excellence Award
presented to
Hubert H. Humphrey
Alumnus

Directory

Alumni Association	Contact Person	E-mail Address	Website/Social Media Page
ACCESS-Philippine Youth Leadership Program Alumni Association, Inc.	Jana Jean G. Dacobor	access.pylp@gmail.com	https://www.facebook.com/accesspylpAA
Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Alumni Association	Dr. Irish Mae Fernandez-Dalona	irishmae.fernandez@g.msuiit.edu.ph	https://www.facebook.com/FL-TAPh/
Fulbright Philippine Agriculture Alumni Association, Inc	Leny C. Galvez	fpaaa2019@gmail.com	
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2020 US-PH EXCHANGE ALUMNI REPORT



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